

2008 SURVEY OF PROPERTY OWNERS CONCERNING THE MADISON RIVER

FACT SHEET

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**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**

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This fact sheet provides selected results from a 2008 survey of private landowners who own property along the Madison River in southwest Montana. Data was collected via a mailback survey administered to private property owners in three separate stretches of the river: (1) Hebgen Dam to Lyon Bridge, (2) Lyon Bridge to Ennis Dam, and (3) Ennis Dam to Three Forks, Montana.

(1) HEBGEN DAM TO LYON BRIDGE

As identified from the Montana Cadastral Database, all private landowners who own property touching the Madison River between Hebgen Dam and Lyon Bridge (N=60 landowners in total) were sent a mailback questionnaire concerning the stretch of the Madison River where they own property. A total of 38 landowners completed and returned their survey (resulting in a 63 percent survey response rate).

The following table presents selected survey findings from these landowners.

Response to: "Information about your perceptions of the conditions you may have experienced as a landowner along the Madison River would be helpful to river managers. In your opinion, how acceptable or unacceptable are the following conditions on the Madison River property you own between Hebgen Dam and Lyon Bridge?"

| CONDITION: | PERCENT Responding... | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Very Unacceptable or Unacceptable | Neither Acceptable or Unacceptable | Very Acceptable or Acceptable |
| The overall quality of the fishing experience | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| The quality of the fishing experience... | | | |
| During the spring (March 1 to June 14) | 0.0 | 21.1 | 78.9 |
| During the summer (June 15 to September 30) | 2.9 | 2.9 | 94.1 |
| During the fall/winter (October 1 to February 28) | 0.0 | 11.8 | 88.2 |
| The number of people FLOAT FISHING* the river... | | | |
| During the spring (March 1 to June 14) | 11.8 | 11.8 | 76.4 |
| During the summer (June 15 to September 30) | 34.4 | 20.7 | 44.9 |
| During the fall/winter (October 1 to February 28) | 6.7 | 13.3 | 80.0 |
| The number of people BANK/WADE FISHING the river... | | | |
| During the spring (March 1 to June 14) | 19.0 | 4.8 | 76.2 |
| During the summer (June 15 to September 30) | 18.2 | 21.2 | 60.6 |
| During the fall/winter (October 1 to February 28) | 5.6 | 5.6 | 88.8 |
| The amount of people floating the river for recreational purposes other than fishing... | | | |
| During the spring (March 1 to June 14) | 5.3 | 31.6 | 63.1 |
| During the summer (June 15 to September 30) | 16.7 | 26.7 | 56.6 |
| During the fall/winter (October 1 to February 28) | 0.0 | 31.3 | 68.7 |
| The number of people trespassing on private property located above the high water mark of the river... | | | |
| During the spring (March 1 to June 14) | 47.8 | 21.7 | 30.5 |
| During the summer (June 15 to September 30) | 51.5 | 18.2 | 30.3 |
| During the fall/winter (October 1 to February 28) | 33.4 | 33.3 | 33.3 |

*This stretch of the river is closed to fishing from boats. However, some anglers float this river stretch, making periodic stops to get out of the boat and fish.

Landowners in this stretch of the river were asked...*Do you have any suggestions or recommendations about how the Madison River should be managed over time?* The most frequently mentioned comments included:

- Concerns about increasing use.
- Concerns about the number of floaters...a need to limit float use.
- Concerns about the number of bank/wade anglers.
- Concerns about too much fishing pressure...becoming too crowded.
- Concerns about trespassing.
- Concerns about recent efforts to establish statewide “setbacks”...related to currently established homes on the river.
- Concerns about increasing development along the river.
- Concerns about the number of out-of-state river guides/outfitters.
- A need for more enforcement on the river.
- Concerns about noxious weeds.

(2) LYON BRIDGE TO ENNIS DAM.

As identified from the Montana Cadastral Database, all private landowners who own property touching the Madison River between Lyon Bridge and Ennis Dam (N=61 landowners in total) were sent a mailback questionnaire concerning the stretch of the Madison River where they own property. A total of 43 landowners completed and returned their survey (resulting in a 70 percent survey response rate).

The following table provides selected survey findings from these landowners.

Response to: “Information about your perceptions of the conditions you may have experienced as a landowner along the Madison River would be helpful to river managers. In your opinion, how acceptable or unacceptable are the following conditions on the Madison River property you own between Lyon Bridge and Ennis Dam?”

| CONDITION: | PERCENT Responding... | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Very Unacceptable or Unacceptable | Neither Acceptable or Unacceptable | Very Acceptable or Acceptable |
| The overall quality of the fishing experience | 8.3 | 0.0 | 91.7 |
| The quality of the fishing experience... | | | |
| During the spring (March 1 to June 14) | 10.3 | 6.9 | 82.8 |
| During the summer (June 15 to September 30) | 16.2 | 0.0 | 83.8 |
| During the fall/winter (October 1 to February 28) | 6.9 | 6.9 | 86.2 |
| The number of people FLOAT FISHING the river... | | | |
| During the spring (March 1 to June 14) | 20.6 | 0.0 | 79.4 |
| During the summer (June 15 to September 30) | 51.4 | 14.3 | 34.3 |
| During the fall/winter (October 1 to February 28) | 17.2 | 3.4 | 79.4 |
| The number of people BANK/WADE FISHING the river... | | | |
| During the spring (March 1 to June 14) | 10.7 | 10.7 | 78.6 |
| During the summer (June 15 to September 30) | 20.0 | 11.4 | 68.6 |
| During the fall/winter (October 1 to February 28) | 10.7 | 10.7 | 78.6 |
| The amount of people floating the river for recreational purposes other than fishing... | | | |
| During the spring (March 1 to June 14) | 7.4 | 14.8 | 77.8 |
| During the summer (June 15 to September 30) | 15.1 | 18.2 | 66.7 |
| During the fall/winter (October 1 to February 28) | 3.8 | 11.5 | 84.7 |
| The number of people trespassing on private property located above the high water mark of the river... | | | |
| During the spring (March 1 to June 14) | 44.0 | 20.0 | 36.0 |
| During the summer (June 15 to September 30) | 59.3 | 10.3 | 30.4 |
| During the fall/winter (October 1 to February 28) | 52.0 | 20.0 | 28.0 |

Landowners in this stretch of the river were asked...*Do you have any suggestions or recommendations about how the Madison River should be managed over time?* The most frequently mentioned comments included:

- Concerns about the number of out-of-state river guides/outfitters.
- Concerns about a high number of float anglers (and their boats) at certain times of the year...diminishing the overall quality of the fishing experience.
- Concerns about trespassing.
- A need for more enforcement on the river.

(3) ENNIS DAM TO THREE FORKS, MONTANA.

As identified from the Montana Cadastral Database, all private landowners who own property touching the Madison River between Ennis Dam and Three Forks, Montana (N=20 landowners in total) were sent a mailback questionnaire concerning the stretch of the Madison River where they own property. A total of 12 landowners completed and returned their survey (resulting in a 60 percent survey response rate).

The following table provides selected survey findings from these landowners.

Response to: “Information about your perceptions of the conditions you may have experienced as a landowner along the Madison River would be helpful to river managers. In your opinion, how acceptable or unacceptable are the following conditions on the Madison River property you own between Ennis Dam and Three Forks, Montana?”

| CONDITION: | PERCENT Responding... | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Very Unacceptable or Unacceptable | Neither Acceptable or Unacceptable | Very Acceptable or Acceptable |
| The overall quality of the fishing experience | 10.0 | 10.0 | 80.0 |
| The quality of the fishing experience... | | | |
| During the spring (March 1 to June 14) | 12.5 | 0.0 | 87.5 |
| During the summer (June 15 to September 30) | 20.0 | 0.0 | 80.0 |
| During the fall/winter (October 1 to February 28) | 12.5 | 0.0 | 87.5 |
| The number of people FLOAT FISHING the river... | | | |
| During the spring (March 1 to June 14) | 0.0 | 25.0 | 75.0 |
| During the summer (June 15 to September 30) | 12.5 | 25.0 | 62.5 |
| During the fall/winter (October 1 to February 28) | 0.0 | 12.5 | 87.5 |
| The number of people BANK/WADE FISHING the river... | | | |
| During the spring (March 1 to June 14) | 0.0 | 25.0 | 75.0 |
| During the summer (June 15 to September 30) | 0.0 | 25.0 | 75.0 |
| During the fall/winter (October 1 to February 28) | 0.0 | 25.0 | 75.0 |
| The amount of people floating the river for recreational purposes other than fishing... | | | |
| During the spring (March 1 to June 14) | 0.0 | 14.3 | 85.7 |
| During the summer (June 15 to September 30) | 25.0 | 12.5 | 62.5 |
| During the fall/winter (October 1 to February 28) | 12.5 | 12.5 | 75.0 |
| The number of people trespassing on private property located above the high water mark of the river... | | | |
| During the spring (March 1 to June 14) | 11.1 | 0.0 | 88.9 |
| During the summer (June 15 to September 30) | 25.0 | 12.5 | 62.5 |
| During the fall/winter (October 1 to February 28) | 44.4 | 0.0 | 55.6 |

Landowners in this stretch of the river were asked...*Do you have any suggestions or recommendations about how the Madison River should be managed over time?* The most frequently mentioned comments included:

- Concerns about trespass.
- Concerns about illegal hunting.
- High recreational use at certain times of the year is hard on the fishery.

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